

14 January 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 14 January Meeting on the "Indochina Steering Group"

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1. [REDACTED] reported that [REDACTED] operation north of the Bolovens Plateau in Laos has gone extraordinarily well so far. There has been no contact with the enemy as yet although some enemy truck movements have been spotted. [REDACTED] reported the "big news" since we last met is the victory at Ban Houi Sai. All of the defenders [REDACTED] There were more than 125 enemy killed; three were captured. Also picked up were 100 AK-47s and five pounds of documents. There was only one Thai dead and two wounded. This all occurred during hand to hand fighting at night. [REDACTED] felt this operation would be very likely to cause major rethinking in Hanoi about the future in Laos, particularly their prospects against [REDACTED] The North Vietnamese had every reason to estimate that [REDACTED] would run in the face of an attack of this kind.

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2. I handed out copies of today's PDB Annex concerning NVN infiltration. [REDACTED] found this most useful for his planning.

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3. [REDACTED] reported that Holderidge of the NSC Staff had suggested that it would be very useful to have a piece on big Minh and his prospects. The emphasis would be on his prospects but should include some personalized background as well. [REDACTED] said that it is surprising that most wheels around town have forgotten that Minh was President at one time after the overthrow of Diem and was in turn overthrown because he was a do-nothing chief. He suggested that whatever piece is done, include something

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along this line. It was agreed that it would be useful to include such a piece in a forthcoming edition of the Developments in Indochina Daily. (Action: FE, please take the necessary steps.)

25X1A 4. [REDACTED] raised the subject of how to arrange a
25X1A future briefing of [REDACTED]. After some discussion it
25X1A was agreed that [REDACTED] for an assessment 25X1A
of the feasibility of [REDACTED] leaving the country for such
a session. This is not thought likely since [REDACTED] has been 25X1A
named commander of the defense of Phnom Penh.

25X1A [REDACTED] 25X1A

25X1A 5. [REDACTED] reported on concern over the fall off of 25X1D
information pertaining to infiltration.

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[REDACTED]

25X1A 6. [REDACTED] noted that there is a conference underway 25X1D
in Honolulu [REDACTED]

25X1D [REDACTED] He complained that no one in DDI knew of this.

25X1A Such a conference needs user input and DDI should be 25X1A
given the option of attending. [REDACTED] of the SAVA
Staff is there, and [REDACTED] will ask him to cable a report
of what is taking place.

25X1A 7. [REDACTED] reported on the status of NSSM 99. Senior
Review Group will meet tomorrow afternoon to discuss the
same papers which caused Dr. Kissinger to walk out of the
meeting on the subject early last month.

25X1A 8. [REDACTED] passed along some information considered
to be highly privileged and sensitive to the effect that
Ambassador Bunker will be returning for consultations
sometime near the end of this month. In part, this is
related to "cosmetics" surrounding a future policy state-
ment on further troop cuts. The first part of the scenario
was Laird's visit to Saigon; Bunker's return will be the
second chapter. Meanwhile, Sullivan wants to use Bunker's
return to thoroughly thrash out a decision on the role
the US mission should take concerning the South Vietnam
Presidential elections. Secretary Laird, of course, will
no doubt be returning with some observations on this
latter point.

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9. [REDACTED] reported that the current ARVN operation against [REDACTED] is scheduled to last 60 days. A larger operation in the Chuup Plantation/Kratie area will begin on the 15th and last for about 90 days.

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[REDACTED]

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Deputy Director of Current Intelligence

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